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Message Text

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41
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 HUD-02 SP-02 L-03 H-02 DODE-00 PA-02

USIA-15 PRS-01 /059 W
---------- 009887
P 201555Z OCT 76
FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 744
AMCONSUL MONTREAL

UNCLAS QUEBEC 0272

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, CA
SUBJECT: AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE REACHED IN QUEBEC CONSTRUCTION DISPUTE

1. STRIKE IN QUEBEC CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY COULD END AS EARLY AS NEXT WEEK WITH YESTERDAY S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE HAD BEEN REACHED BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF QUEBEC FEDERATION OF LABOR (QFL) AND ASSOC. OF BUILDING CONTRACTORS (ABCQ). TENTATIVE CONTRACT AGREEMENT, REACHED AFTER FOUR DAYS OF CONTINUOUS TALKS INVOLVING QUEBEC DEPUTY MINISTER OF LABOR GILLES LAPORTE, WOULD END SIX-WEEK OLD STRIKE HAMPERING WORK ON CONSTRUCTION SITES THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE. TERMS OF CONTRACT WILL BE SUBMITTED TO UNION MEMBERS FOR VOTE WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS, AND, IF ACCEPTED AS EXPECTED, WORK ON ALL SITES COULD RESUME BY OCT 25.

2. AGREEMENT DOES NOT SETTLE ALL ISSUES INVOLVED IN DISPUTE. QUESTION OF JURISDICTION OF VARIOUS CONSTRUCTION TRADES WILL BE SUBMITTED TO BINDING ARBITRATION WHILE KEY ISSUE OF UNION HIRING HALLS STILL MUST BE RESOLVED THROUGH GOVT LEGISLATION. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT SUCH LEGISLATION WILL FOLLOW CLICHE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION BY RETAINING HALLS BUT UNDER TIGHT CONTROL. WHEN NEW CONTRACT IS RATIFIED, AVERAGE HOURLY PAY
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RATES FOR WORKERS WOULD RISE TO 8.31 DOLLARS AND TO 10.04 DOLLARS

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AT END OF THREE YEARS. PAY PARITY AMONG WORKERS IN DIFFERENT
PARTS OF PROVINCE WOULD COME ONLY DURING SECOND YEAR OF CONTRACT.

3. COMMENT: CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY STRIKE NEVER HAD FULL
SUPPORT OF WORKERS. MAJORITY REMAINED OFF JOB ONLY IN METRO-
POLITAN AREAS SUCH AS MONTREAL AND HULL. INDEED, IT APPEARED
ONLY MATTER OF TIME BEFORE STRIKE WAS BROKEN EVEN IN THOSE
UNION STRONGHOLDS. AGREEMENT, IF RATIFIED, WOULD BE FIRST
REACHED BY NEGOTIATION IN LAST 10 YEARS IN THIS INDUSTRY.
GOVT IMPOSED TERMS OF LAST TWO CONTRACTS IN 1970 AND 1973 AND
WAS FORCED EXTEND THE 1973 DECREE BY THREE MONTHS EARLY THIS
YEAR TO INSURE COMPLETION OF WORK ON OLYMPIC CONSTRUCTION SITE.
AS PROVINCIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN ROLLS ON, PREMIER BOURASSA
SURE TO POINT TO THIS NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT AS EXAMPLE OF LABOR
PEACE HE IS BRINGING TO PROVINCE. TIMING OF SETTLEMENT AT
BEGINNING OF ELECTION CAMPAIGN SUGGESTS BEHIND SCENES INTER-
VENTION MAY HAVE PLAYED PART IN SETTLEMENT.
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